



The International Rescue Committee in Bangladesh: Programme updates

(January 2022)

IRC Response

The IRC began responding to the Rohingya crisis in August 2017 and launched its response officially in March 2018. Since then, we have served 555,424 people. With over 400 staff in Bangladesh and operating across 27 camps across the district, our teams provide essential healthcare to the host community as well as Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar, as well as reproductive and maternal healthcare, child protection, education, prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence, and Emergency Disaster Risk Reduction (EDRR). The IRC has 3 operational offices in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Ukhiya.

In 2020, the IRC set up one of the largest health centres for the treatment of COVID-19 and was also designated the lead NGO to administer vaccines from two IRC primary healthcare centres.

Programming updates

Health- 231,394 people served

Focusing primarily on meeting the health needs of women and girls, the IRC has 4 primary health centres, 1 sexual reproductive health facility, 31 women friendly spaces, 4 safe spaces for women and 17 referral hubs throughout 28 refugee camps and nearby host communities. Sexual and reproductive health services include family planning, antenatal and postnatal care and the delivery of newborn babies.

COVID-19

On Tuesday 10th August, the first COVID-19 vaccines designated for Rohingya refugees were administered by IRC staff in Cox's Bazar. Since then, IRC health staff have been working to deliver doses to people aged 55 and over at two designated IRC Primary Healthcare Centres across the Cox's Bazar camps; in two of the major camps, the IRC is the only health actor delivering vaccines.

The IRC set up a 60 bed Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Centre (ITC) hospital in Cox's Bazar - one of the largest in Cox's Bazar - where more than 96 patients were treated, including 35 COVID-19 positive cases, while others were treated for COVID-19 like symptoms. Through Community Health Volunteers, IRC teams also help to address misinformation about the virus and travel door-to-door to sensitise communities to COVID-19 prevention methods. We have reached more than

400,000 people with COVID-19 information and distributed over half a million masks and thousands of hygiene kits as part of our COVID response.

The IRC is also supporting four Government managed ITCs and have treated hundreds of patients.

Major Highlights:

- 269,717 clients were reached through community outreach (Rohingya refugees-139,342 and host communities-130,375)
- 54,078 clients were vaccinated (Rohingya refugees-1,957 and host communities-52,121)
- 9,458 clients from host communities were tested for COVID-19
- 11,467 clients from host communities received comprehensive COVID-19 treatment

Women's Protection & Empowerment - 100,563 people served

Our WPE programming facilitates healing, dignity and the self-determination of women and girls among the Rohingya and host communities who have experienced, or are at risk of, violence. Programmes include Start, Awareness, Support, Action (SASA!), Girl Shine, and Engaging Men Through Accountable Practices, and working alongside local partners, the IRC provides psychosocial support and referral services, prevention activities for Gender-Based Violence, and lifeskills training. Our teams strive to provide women's leadership and the ultimate goal is to create opportunities for women and girls to transform their lives and make their voices heard.

The IRC plays a critical role in coordinating the management of services to support survivors of Gender-Based Violence, with interventions in 15 camps and 17 unions of the host community including in Ukhiya, Teknaf, Ramu and Charkia. The IRC also provides response services in 18 health facilities, 8 nutrition centers and 2 GBV services centers.

Protection and Rule of Law - 25,280 people served

Working to support Rohingya refugees and the host community, the IRC works to identify, analyze and report on the environment throughout refugee camps in Cox's Bazar by coordinating focus groups and interviewing community members. A key component is Access to Justice, where our teams monitor and analyze protection trends, and disseminate information on protection and availability of services. A total of 14 reports have been produced.

Child Protection - 62,337 people served

Serving the Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar, interventions target children and teenagers who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation with case management services, psychosocial support, economic empowerment, and community-based protection. The IRC has trained case workers, 60% of whom are female, who are professionally skilled to address the needs of children, and also provide Safe Healing and Learning Spaces to allow children to learn, develop and be protected. Children aged 6-10 are offered Social and Emotional Learning, while those aged 11-19 are provided support to develop positive coping strategies to prepare for the transition to adulthood. Through the IRC's

structured curriculum 'Learn to Lead' and 'Lead to Earn', the IRC equips adolescent children with civic engagement and transferable business skills to succeed in later life.

Caregivers are included through a positive parenting curriculum that teaches them to support children recovering from distress and to strengthen protection throughout the community. Meanwhile, local partners are trained on core issues around child protection.

Education - 6,916 people served

The IRC's education programming started in the Rohingya refugee camps and host communities in 2019, focusing on ensuring that children aged 0-5 develop cognitive and social-emotional skills, and that school aged children develop literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills, and that youth have high levels of all. Key programmes include the Pop Up Pilot in 2020 for autonomous learning, which supported 592 children; the support of 41 home-based learning facilities since August 2019; remote learning initiatives to support learning throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; ECD interventions, where remote education services are designed to promote learning through the use of audio voice and quiz calls, SMS, and live calls through a new Interactive Voice Response platform.

Emergency Preparedness and Response support

Through Disaster Preparedness and Response and climate resilience programming, the IRC aims to strengthen capacities across community systems to build resilience to emergencies such as flooding, monsoons and landslides, by promoting disaster knowledge and skills in order to prevent loss of life, health and assets. Major interventions include the formation of an emergency surge team that consists of health, protection and operations staff that can form a mobile medical team to respond to any disaster within 24 hours, in coordination with other humanitarian actors in Cox's Bazar. Our teams also provide multi-hazard awareness raising activities, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) as well as emergency preparedness to deliver immediate lifesaving health and protection services and referrals including psychosocial support, Gender-Based Violence and child protection during times of disaster.

Major highlights of emergency preparedness and response are:

- The host community received cash assistance for a total of 837 households, 739 of whom were female-headed households and 98 were male-headed households.
- A total of 9,322 dignity kits were distributed to vulnerable women and girls, including 7,134 Rohingya and 2188 host community recipients.
- Total 253 households received FTR (Family Tracing and Reunification) support, where 140 were female and 113 were male.
- Total 1,401 people received capacity building training on multi-hazard preparedness, 788 of whom were female and 613 were male.
- Total 382,614 people were reached through multi hazard (flood, land slide, fire, etc.) awareness messages, where 265,976 were female and 116,638 were male.
- In the flood affected areas of the host community a total of 710 females received cash assistance.

Host community support

The IRC is committed to providing humanitarian support to Rohingya refugees and the local communities who have been affected by the establishment of refugee camps. Between June 2018 to September 2021, the IRC supported 244,945 Bangladeshi nationals, with COVID-19 and livelihoods support, water and sanitation, education and Gender-Based Violence response services.

Bangladesh staff contacts

IRC country director Manish Agrawal, an Indian national, is a qualified humanitarian and development professional with over 22 years' experience in the humanitarian sector nationally and internationally.

Humayun Kabir Khan, the IRC information officer for Bangladesh, has over a decade of experience in the development sector globally.

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For more information

Country page: [Rescue.org/country/Bangladesh](https://www.rescue.org/country/Bangladesh)

Additional information: [The IRC's Bangladesh publications](#)